fact that I spend an hour or two every day doing this; and when they send me the monthly return of my troops and fleets, which take up about 20 big files, I give up every other occupation to study them in detail, and to see what difference there is between one month and another. I get more enjoyment out of reading these returns than a young girl does out of reading a novel. . . .

[CORRESP., xiii, 10672.]

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THE JEWS

TO M. DE CHAMPAGNY

RAMBOUILLET, *August* 23, 1806.

I SEND you some notes which will show you what direction I want to give to the Jewish Congress, and what the government representatives attached to the Congress have to do at the present juncture.

Notes

It is the first time, since Titus' capture of Jerusalem, that so many enlightened men belonging to the religion of Moses have been able to foregather. Hitherto the Jews, persecuted and dispersed, have been expected to do nothing but receive punishment, abjure their faith, or make contracts or concessions equally unfavourable to their interests and to their beliefs. The present situation is unlike any of the epochs which have preceded it. The Jews are neither being asked to abandon their religion, nor to accept any modifications contrary to the letter or spirit of Judaism.

When they were being persecuted, or were in hiding to escape persecution, different kinds of doctrine and custom crept in. The Rabbis, indeed, claimed the right to expound the principles of the faith, whenever explanation was required. But the right of legislation, in matters of religion,

cannot belong to any individual; it can only be exercised by a General Assembly of Jews, legally and freely brought together, including in its body Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and French Jews, and thus representing the Jewries of more than three-quarters of Europe.

It seems to me, therefore, that the first thing to do is to constitute the Congress at present assembled in Paris into a Great Sanhedrin, whose decisions will rank alongside the Talmud as articles of faith and principles of religious legislation.

This first point thus settled, all Jews, of whatever nationality, will be invited to send deputies to Paris, and to contribute their ideas to the work of the Great Sanhedrin. A notification, in the form of a sort of proclamation, will therefore be issued to every synagogue in Europe—officially, in the case of French synagogues. Certain questions will then be proposed to this gathering, and the answers given will be made into theological rulings or instructions, so that they may have the force of ecclesiastical and religious law, and form a second Jewish dispensation, preserving the essential character of that of Moses, but adapting itself to the present condition of the Jews, and to the customs and usages of the day.

The following questions have been propounded:—

1st Question. Is it lawful for Jews to marry more than one wife?—The answer must be a plain negative, and the present Congress or Great Sanhedrin must prohibit polygamy in Europe.

2nd Question. Is divorce permitted by the Jewish religion? And is divorce invalid unless it has been pronounced by courts, or in virtue of laws, which take a radically different view from that of the French people?—The Congress constituted as the Great Sanhedrin must prohibit divorce, except in the cases provided by the Code Napoléon, and it cannot take place unless it has been previously granted by the civil authority.

3rd Question. Can a Jewess marry a Christian, or a Christian woman a Jew? Or does the law only allow Jews

to marry among themselves? The Great Sanhedrin must declare that a religious marriage has to be preceded by a civil marriage, and that Jews and Jewesses can marry Frenchmen or Frenchwomen. The Great Sanhedrin must go further, and recommend such unions as a means of protection for Jews, and as a proper thing for them to do.

4th Question. Do Jews regard Frenchmen as brethren, or as strangers?—The Sanhedrin, after recognising, as the Assembly has done, that Frenchmen and Jews are brothers, will lay down this principle: that the Jews recognise as brethren the inhabitants of all countries which grant them not merely toleration, but also protection, and in which they are admitted to the enjoyment of all the privileges attached to political and civil status. It will recognise, in this connection, the difference which exists between French and Italian law and that of other countries.

5th Question. In any case, what duties does their law prescribe to Jews towards Frenchmen who are not of the Jewish religion?—The answer to this question follows from what was said above.

6th Question. Do Jews who were born in France, and who have the legal status of French citizens, regard France as their fatherland? Is it their duty to defend it, to obey its laws, and to accommodate themselves to all the provisions of the Civil Code?—The Sanhedrin must declare that it is the duty of Jews to defend France as they would defend Jerusalem, since they are treated in France as they would be treated in the Holy City; that substitution can only be allowed for half the number of conscripts each year, and that the rest must serve in person.

7th Question. Who nominates the Rabbis?—The Sanhedrin must decide by whom the Rabbis are to be nominated, and how they are to be organised and paid; and it must establish in Paris a Council of Rabbis, whose members will be regarded as the Superiors and Supervisors of the Jews. This committee will reside in Paris, and will be called the Rabbis' Committee, or something of that kind.

8th Question. What police jurisdiction do the Rabbis

exercise over the Jews? What kind of police magistracy do they recognise among themselves?

9th Question. Are the forms of election and jurisdiction of the police magistrates laid down by Jewish law, or merely consecrated by custom?—The Sanhedrin must draw up the regulations required to determine the method of election, the functions, the jurisdiction, etc., of the Rabbis.

10th Question. Are there any professions prohibited by Jewish law?

11th Question. Does the law forbid Jews to practise usury in dealing with their brethren?

12th Question. Does it forbid or does it allow them to practice usury in dealing with strangers?—The Sanhedrin must prohibit usury in dealing with Frenchmen, or with the inhabitants of any countries where Jews are allowed to enjoy civil rights. It will expound the Mosaic Law on these lines, laying it down that Jews ought to behave, in all places where they are citizens, as though they were in Jerusalem itself; that they are strangers only where they are persecuted or ill-treated by the law of the land; and that it is only in such places that illicit gain can be tolerated by religious legislation. When this point has been regulated by the Sanhedrin on these lines, we must look further into the matter for some means of limiting and repressing this habit of speculation, which is nothing but a system of fraud and usury.

All this is meant simply to serve as instructions for the Commissioners. They will realise what is wanted, and will begin by looking for means to secure it, by having private talks with the most influential members of the Assembly. When they are clear in their own minds, they will go to the Assembly; they will say that I am pleased with the zeal that animates its proceedings; they will emphasise the uniqueness of the occasion, and explain that I am anxious to do all I can to prevent the rights restored to the Jewish people proving illusory—in a word, that I want them to find in France a New Jerusalem. They are then to ask for the formation of a committee of nine members chosen from

amongst the most enlightened members of the Assembly, with whom they can co-operate, with the hope of reaching important results. This Committee will report to the Assembly. It will begin by suggesting the formation of the Great Sanhedrin.

[CORRESP., xiii, 10686. The National Assembly of 1789 had given the Jews civic rights, but had not dealt with the consequential problems. The Great Sanhedrin met on February 9, 1807, but two months later Napoleon dissolved it, and settled the whole question by an Imperial edict of March 17, 1808.]

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PRUSSIA—PEACE OR WAR?

TO M. DE TALLEYRAND, PRINCE OF BENEVENTO, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Note on the present situation

SAINT-CLOUD, *September* 12, 1806.

IT is not in my interest to trouble the peace of the continent. Austria is not in a position to attempt anything. Russia and Prussia are kept apart by every kind of rivalry and dislike. Austria's wounds are still unhealed. It may be assumed that no considerable force of Russians can appear in Europe just yet. They might go to some lengths to attack the Porte: they might keep reserves in Poland: but I don't think they will again run the risk of sending 100,000 men into Germany.

The idea that Prussia could take me on single-handed is too absurd to merit discussion. It is impossible for me to have a genuine alliance with any of the great European powers: Prussia is only my ally through fear. Her cabinet is so contemptible, her king so weak, and her court so dominated by young officers in search of adventure, that no one can depend upon her. She will go on acting as she has acted—arming to-day, disarming to-morrow; standing by,